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Federal Communications Commission

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

In The Matter of

Petition of

PRONET INC

For Amendment of the Commission's
Rules to Allocate Spectrum for
Permanent Provision of Electronic
Tracking Services ("ETS") and to
Amend the Commission's Rules to
Authorize ETS Permanently under
the Business Radio Service

RM-7784

To: The Commission

COMMENTS OF WATERWAY COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM, INC.

Waterway Communications System, Inc. ("WATERCOM"),
by its attorney, respectfully submits the following comments
in response to the Commission's Public Notice of the
Petition for Rulemaking filed by ProNet, Inc. ("ProNet")
seeking recognition of electronic tracking services ("ETS")
under Part 90 of the Commission's Rules.

I. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

WATERCOM is the licensee of the Automated Maritime
Telecommunications System ("AMTS") which serves the 4,000
mile transportation corridor consisting of the Mississippi,
Ohio and Illinois Rivers and the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway.
WATERCOM is the product of the efforts initiated by the
domestic maritime transportation industry in the mid-1970s

to secure reliable and efficient communications services consistent with the capabilities of modern technology. WATERCOM also represents the fulfillment of the Commission's objective at the World Administrative Radio Conference, Geneva, 1979 in obtaining a new maritime mobile allocation in the VHF band to meet short-range maritime communication requirements.

WATERCOM is the major provider of domestic telecommunications services for vessels engaged in inland maritime transportation. The WATERCOM system provides a direct-dial, delay free, continuous service communications capability. In addition, WATERCOM provides data and facsimile services, which previously were not available to the domestic maritime user community.

II. COMMENTS

ProNet seeks Commission rule provisions assigning 218.0, 218.5 and 219.0 MHz for ETS operations. As an initial matter, it appears that the rule amendments proposed by ProNet are superfluous. As acknowledged by ProNet, the ETS function described in the Petition for Rulemaking currently is rendered under the Commission's telemetry rules. This, accordingly, is not an allocation proceeding;

nor are the current rules incompatible with the ETS functions described by ProNet. Indeed, in an era of simplification of agency regulations, ProNet's request for elaboration and particularization appears to run contrary to the trend of the regulatory philosophy of the Commission.

Two of the channels requested by ProNet for designation for ETS are band-edge frequencies to WATERCOM's AMTS assignments.^{1/} Particularization of channels as requested by ProNet may be expected to have a "magnet effect" so to result in concentration of assignments and telemetry operations on those frequencies.

Notwithstanding the low power of the ProNet ETS equipment, WATERCOM is concerned about the potential for interference due to the fact that WATERCOM's coast station receivers are engineered at a high sensitivity level, greater than customary in mobile systems, in order to facilitate the signal processing inherent to the WATERCOM system operation, particularly for the system control

^{1/} The third channel requested by ProNet is a band-edge to the "Group C" AMTS channels which currently are frozen from AMTS application pending disposition of the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in Gen. Docket No. 91-2, 6 FCC Rcd. 1368 (1991).

channels. Close operation of an ETS transmitter to a WATERCOM shore station could result in capture of a WATERCOM channel, and the low power and itinerant use of the ETS would serve to inhibit prompt identification and resolution of the interference problem. Contemporaneously, there is a strong likelihood that WATERCOM's shore stations could mask or otherwise interfere with ETS transmissions in close proximity. While ProNet proposes that ETS have secondary status to AMTS operations, nonetheless WATERCOM believes that good spectrum management requires avoidance of likely interference situations.

WATERCOM respectfully submits that ETS should be dispersed throughout the available frequency bands in terms of channels of operation in order to minimize interference potential. The telemetry rules as they currently exist accomplish this result. On the other hand, should particular channelization be deemed by the Commission to be appropriate and necessary, WATERCOM believes that such channelization should occur in the AMTS "Group D" shore station transmit band, 216.0-216.5 MHz. This latter suggestion is premised upon the Commission's proposal in Gen. Docket No. 91-2 to provide for "Interactive Video Data Service" on the AMTS Group D ship station frequencies,

218.0-218.5 MHz. Were such an allocation to be adopted, the paired AMTS frequencies at 216.0-216.5 MHz would be unavailable for AMTS; and under these circumstances good spectrum planning would dictate that the AMTS Group D shore station channels would make an appropriate home for the ETS.

WHEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, Waterway Communications System, Inc., respectfully urges the Federal Communications Commission to DISMISS RM-7784, or otherwise to act upon said petition in accordance with the foregoing views and recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Bercovici", is written over the typed name.

Martin W. Bercovici
Attorney for
Waterway Communications
System, Inc.

Due: September 26, 1991

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Martin W. Bercovici, hereby certify to serving, on this date, a copy of the foregoing "Comments of Waterway Communications System, Inc.," by United States first-class mail, postage prepaid upon the following party:

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